

During times of peace, the U.S. Merchant Marine helps ensure our economic security by keeping the oceans open to trade. Ships operated by merchant mariners transport goods across our Nation's waterways and on the high seas around the world to connect American businesses and consumers with valuable foreign markets and commodities. The skill and expertise of merchant mariners facilitates trade and helps to strengthen our economy.

In times of war, the Merchant Marine is the lifeline of our troops overseas. By carrying critical supplies, equipment, and personnel, merchant mariners provide essential support to our Armed Forces and help advance the cause of freedom. Today, merchant mariners are supporting operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, and their devotion to duty is a tribute to the generations of men and women who have served our Nation with courage and determination in every conflict in America's history. On this day, and throughout the year, America is grateful for their service.

In recognition of the importance of the U.S. Merchant Marine, the Congress, by joint resolution approved on May 20, 1933, as amended, has designated May 22 of each year as "National Maritime Day," and has authorized and requested that the President issue an annual proclamation calling for its appropriate observance.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 22, 2007, as National Maritime Day. I call upon the people of the United States to mark this observance by honoring the service of merchant mariners and by displaying the flag of the United States at their homes and in their communities. I also request that all ships sailing under the American flag dress ship on that day.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this eighteenth day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-first.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 22, 2007]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 23. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

May 19, 2007

Good morning. This week, my administration reached an agreement with Republicans and Democrats in the Senate on immigration reform. I thank the leaders in both parties who worked hard to produce legislation that will secure the border, restore respect for the law, and meet the legitimate needs of our economy.

This legislation includes all the elements required for comprehensive immigration reform. It will improve security at our borders. It will give employers new tools to verify the employment status of workers and hold businesses to account for those they hire. It will create a temporary-worker program. It will help us resolve the status of millions of illegal immigrants who are here already, without animosity and without amnesty. And it will honor the great American tradition of the melting pot by strengthening our efforts to help new arrivals assimilate into our society.

Here's how the bill works. First, it will require the strong border security and enforcement benchmarks are met before other elements of the legislation are implemented. These benchmarks include completing our plan to double the number of Border Patrol agents, improving border infrastructure, and maintaining enough beds in our detention facilities so that all those apprehended at the border can be held and returned to their home countries. We will also improve work-site enforcement by implementing an effective system to verify worker eligibility using tamper-resistant identification cards and by imposing stiffer penalties on companies that knowingly violate the law. Once these benchmarks are met, they will trigger other provisions of comprehensive reform.

The legislation will create a new temporary-worker program. Such a program will help our economy and take pressure off the border by providing foreign workers with a legal and orderly way to enter our country to fill jobs that Americans are not doing. To

ensure that this program is truly temporary, workers will be limited to three 2-year terms, with at least a year spent outside the United States between each term. Temporary workers will be allowed to bring immediate family members only if they demonstrate that they can support them financially and that their family members are covered by health insurance.

This legislation will also help resolve the status of illegal immigrants who are already in our country, without amnesty. Those who come out of the shadows will be given probationary status. If they pass a strict background check, pay a fine, hold a job, maintain a clean criminal record, and eventually learn English, they will qualify for and maintain a Z visa. If they want to become citizens, they have to do all these things plus pay an additional fine, go to the back of the line, pass a citizenship test, and return to their country to apply for their green card.

This legislation will also strengthen our efforts to help new immigrants assimilate. The key to unlocking the full promise of America is the ability to speak English. This bill affirms that English is the language of the United States. And it provides new opportunities for immigrants to learn English and embrace the shared ideals that bind us as a nation.

In addition, this legislation will clear the backlog of family members who've applied to come to our country lawfully and have been waiting patiently in line. This legislation will end chain migration by limiting the relatives who can automatically receive green cards to spouses and minor children. And this legislation will transform our immigration system so that future immigration decisions are focused on admitting immigrants who have the skills, education, and English proficiency that will help America compete in a global economy.

I realize that many hold strong convictions on this issue, and reaching an agreement was not easy. I appreciate the efforts of Senators who came together to craft this important

legislation. This bill brings us closer to an immigration system that enforces our laws and upholds the great American tradition of welcoming those who share our values and our love of freedom.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on May 18 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 19. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 18 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Message on the Observance of Cuban Independence Day, 2007

May 18, 2007

I send greetings to all those celebrating the 105th anniversary of Cuba's Independence.

The longing for justice, freedom, and human rights is a desire that can be delayed but never denied. The United States remains committed to extending the full blessings of liberty around the world, and on this important milestone, we stand united with freedom-loving people of all nations in the conviction that Cuba's future must be one of dignity, liberty, and opportunity.

This day is also an opportunity to recognize the generations of Cuban Americans who have made contributions to our society. Your hard work and high ideals reflect the best of America and enrich our Nation.

Laura and I send our best wishes. May God bless the people of Cuba and all the sons and daughters of Cuba who call America home.

George W. Bush

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 20. An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.